THE MINISTER OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) As reported by the State Government of Rajasthan, 1691 small scale industrial (SSI) units have been closed during the last three years (2001-04). As regards Punjab, 103 SSI units are reported to have been deregistered during the last three years (2001-04) on account of continuous closure for more than one year and other reasons.

(b) The main reasons for their closure are inadequacy/shortage of working capital, fall in demand, changes in technology, shortage of raw materials, marketing problems, increase in competition on account of globalisation and liberalization, etc.

Package for SSIs in Rajasthan and Punjab

180. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any special packages have been granted to Rajasthan and Punjab in the Tenth Five Year Plan to revive the Small Scale Industries of the States;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what is the percentage of growth expected by the end of the Tenth Five Year Plan in Small Scale Industries in Rajasthan; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR PRASAD): (a) and (b) Based on the recommendations of the Working Group set up under the Chairmanship of Shri S.S. Kohli, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has drawn up revised guidelines for rehabilitation of sick Small Scale Industry units, which include, *inter alia*, change in the definition of sick Small Scale Industry units, norms for deciding their viability, concessional finance, etc. The RBI has circulated the revised guidelines on 16th January 2002 to all the Scheduled Commercial Banks for implementation. The revised criteria will facilitate the banks to detect sickness at an early stage and take corrective action for revival of the potentially viable sick SSI units. The revised guidelines are to be implemented in all the States/Union Territories in the country including the States of Rajasthan and Punjab. Further, the Government of Rajasthan has made a provision of Rs. 50 lakh as Interest Free Loan in lieu of Sales Tax for the revival of sick SSI units under special package during the Tenth Five Year Plan in the State Plan.

(c) and (d) The estimated growth rate of SSIs to be set up in the State of Rajasthan by the end of the Tenth Five Year Plan is 7%.

Unidentified flying object in Himachal Pradesh

181. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:
SHRI R.P. GOENKA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a scientist of ISRO come across an unidentified flying object (UFO) during a scientific expedition in Himachal Pradesh on September 27, 2004;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it was an espionage device;

(d) if so, the country or organization responsible for the same; and

(e) the steps taken to improve detecting machinery to be more effective?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A team of scientists from ISRO and the Government college, Dharmashala were at the Samudra-Tapu glacial region, near Chandra Tal, Lahaul and Spiti District, Himachal Pradesh for an expedition to study the glacial retreat, when they sighted one unidentified object of 3-4 feet size, which had a set of balloons attached to it. The object moved downward and later upward to the ridge top and then into the atmosphere, after which visual sighting was lost. The object was visible for about 40 minutes. The sighting was reported to the local Police and the Military authorities.

(c) to (e) However, the object was photographed, being at a very high altitude, its exact nature could not be determined.

Joint Communication Satellite between ISRO and Boeing

182. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ISRO and Boeing Satellite Systems of USA are jointly building a Communication Satellite very soon;